



Department of Finance  
Canada

Ministère des Finances  
Canada

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Loi sur l'accès à l'information  
**MEMORANDUM NOTE DE SERVICE**

TO  
À

Richard Maksymetz  
c.c: Dan Lauzon  
Ben Chin  
Justin To

*Signed by Minc*  
FEB 19 2018

FROM  
DE

Paul Rochon

Security classification	Classification de sécurité
<b>PROTECTED A</b>	
Originator	Auteur
David Gaw	
Our file	Notre référence
Your file	Votre référence
2018FIN469069	
Date	FEB 16 2018

SUBJECT  
OBJET

**Public Opinion Research - 2018 Budget Day Focus Groups**

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**For action. Your decision is requested by February 20, 2018.**

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Attached, for your approval, is a copy of the proposed moderator's guide to be used during Budget day focus groups.

In keeping with past practice, the Department will engage in focus group testing on Budget day to gauge early public reaction to the Minister's Budget speech.

The focus groups will take place in Montreal and Toronto. Participants will be asked a range of questions concerning the economy and recent government initiatives and policies. They will then watch the Minister's speech and subsequently answer the same set of questions.

Department representatives will observe the focus group sessions and we will share the results with you that evening.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that you approve the attached Moderator's Guide.

I concur: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

*Attachment (1)*

**MODERATOR'S GUIDE – MARCH 2017 (Draft March 07 2017)**

**INTRODUCTION (5 Minutes)**

- Introduce moderator and welcome participants to the focus group.
  - As we indicated during the recruiting process, we are conducting focus group discussions on behalf of the Government of Canada.
- The discussion will last approximately 2.5-3 hours. Feel free to excuse yourself during the session if necessary.
- Explanation re:
  - Audio-taping – The session is being audio-taped for analysis purposes, in case we need to double-check the proceedings against our notes. These audio-tapes remain in our possession and will not be released to anyone without written consent from all participants.
  - One-way mirror – There are observers representing the government who will be watching the discussion from behind the glass.
  - It is also important for you to know that your responses today will in no way affect your dealings with the Government of Canada.
  - Confidentiality – Please note that anything you say during these groups will be held in the strictest confidence. We do not attribute comments to specific people. Our report summarizes the findings from the groups but does not mention anyone by name. The report can be accessed through the Library of Parliament or Archives Canada.
- Describe how a discussion group functions:
  - Discussion groups are designed to stimulate an open and honest discussion. My role as a moderator is to guide the discussion and encourage everyone to participate. Another function of the moderator is to ensure that the discussion stays on topic and on time.
  - Your role is to answer questions and voice your opinions. We are looking for minority as well as majority opinion in a focus group, so don't hold back if you have a comment even if you feel your opinion may be different from others in the group. There may or may not be others who share your point of view. Everyone's opinion is important and should be respected.
  - I would also like to stress that there are no wrong answers. We are simply looking for your opinions and attitudes. This is not a test of your knowledge. We did not expect you to do anything in preparation for this group.

Please note that the moderator is not an employee of the Government of Canada and may not be able to answer some of your questions about what we will be discussing. If important questions do come up over the course of the group, we will try to get answers for you before you leave.

## OVERVIEW OF DIALS AND PROCESS (5 Minutes)

- The first part of the group will get you comfortable with PA dials, explain how they work, in both real time as well as with closed ended questions
  - In real time, the scale will be 0-100, where 100 means you like what you are hearing a lot, and 0 means you dislike what you are hearing a lot. Participants should focus less on specific #s and more on turning the dials up and down based on how strongly they feel.
    - Importance of "starting at 50"
  - In closed ended, number of answer categories will differ, turn to the ones relevant to you
    - ie. gender scale is 2pt – Female will be 1, Male will be 2
  - We will be using the dials to answer some questions, but also so you can share your impressions of the Federal Budget that will be announced shortly.
  - We will measure reaction to the speech
- We will get you to answer about 20 questions before and after the speech, using the dials
- After the speech, we will have and then follow with discussion about what you saw/heard, using how you reacted using the dials as reference points
- So first step is to answer initial questions, then we will watch the speech (which will be 30-45 minutes in length), answer questions, watch opposition reaction, then have a discussion

## TRIAL RUN OF DIALS (5 Minutes)

Before we begin, I would like you to do a quick survey with you to ensure that the "dial" technology that we will be using this afternoon is working properly. As you can see, each of you has a dial in front of you with numbers from 0 to 100. I'm going to ask you a series of questions and I'd like you to submit your responses using the dial as I instruct.

With the questions that we will be asking you to answer over the next few minutes, the scale on your dialer will change, depending on the question. You will be asked to turn the dial to the number that reflects your answer to each question.

Before the speech begins, the dialers will be programmed to have a "0-100" scale, and you will be asked to turn the dial as discussed. 0=very negative, 100=very positive.

**PRE-GROUP QUESTIONS (15 Minutes)**

*Moderator will read questions out to participants*

**Q1.** Some people say that, while the country has some problems, Canada is generally headed in the right direction. Other people say that there are more things going badly than well in Canada right now and that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Which of those two statements is closer to your own opinion?

0 - DK/NR

1 - Right direction

2 - Wrong direction

**Q2.** How would you rate the current state of the Canadian economy? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent.

10 – Excellent

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1 – Terrible

0 – DNK/REF

**Q3.** Over the next six months, do you think the Canadian economy will be stronger, weaker or will there be no change?

3 - Stronger

1 - Weaker

2 - No change

0 - DNK/REF

**Q5.** For each of the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree with them. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.

I think the government understands the issues that affect our economy today

I think the government understands the issues that affect our economy in the future

I think the government understands the issues that affect my personal economic situation

The government is pursuing economic policies that will help low income Canadians

The government is pursuing economic policies that will help middle class families

The government is taking positive steps to help Indigenous people

The government is taking positive steps to improve gender equity

The government is pursuing policies that encourage science and innovation

The government is taking positive steps to improve fairness in the tax system

The government is taking positive steps to promote job creation

The government is taking positive steps to protect the environment

The government is pursuing economic policies that will benefit me

[1 - 10]

0 - DK/NR

Q6. Now thinking about the upcoming Federal Budget, to what extent would you say that your expectations are positive or negative?

0 - DK/NR

1 - very positive

2 - somewhat positive

3 - neutral

4 - somewhat negative

5 - very negative

Q7. Are you?

1- Male

2- Female

Q8. Is your highest level of education?

1 - High school Graduate or below

2 - Some University

3 - University Graduate or Post Graduate

Q9. How would you describe your household income? (If necessary, average being between 55-75k/yr)

1 - Above Average

2 - Average

3 - Below Average

Q10. How old are you?

1 - 30 years or under

2 - 31 to 49 years old

3 - 50 years or older

#### **SPEECH (45 Minutes)**

*Participants will be asked to watch the Budget Speech and use the dialer to respond either positively or negatively to what the Minister is saying, using the 0-100 scale, where 100 reflects a very positive impression of what is heard or seen and 0 reflects a very negative impression of what is heard or seen.*

**Note to moderators:**

*Periodically prompt participants throughout the speech to ensure they remain engaged and focused and are using the dialers to respond.*

**POST-SPEECH QUESTIONS (15 Minutes)**

*Now, before we have a discussion, I would like to ask you some more questions with the dials...*

**Q1. Some people say that, while the country has some problems, Canada is generally headed in the right direction. Other people say that there are more things going badly than well in Canada right now and that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Which of those two statements is closer to your own opinion?**

**0 - DK/NR**

**1 - Right direction**

**2 - Wrong direction**

**Q2. How would you rate the current state of the Canadian economy? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent.**

**10 – Excellent**

**9**

**8**

**7**

**6**

**5**

**4**

**3**

**2**

**1 – Terrible**

**0 – DNK/REF**

**Q3. Over the next six months, do you think the Canadian economy will be stronger, weaker or will there be no change?**

**3 - Stronger**

**1 - Weaker**

**2 - No change**

**0 - DNK/REF**

**Q5. For each of the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree with them. Please use a scale, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.**

**I think the government understands the issues that affect the health of our economy today**

**I think the government understands the issues that affect the health of our economy in future**

**I think the government understands the issues that affect the health of my personal economic situation**

**The government is pursuing economic policies that will help low income Canadians**

**The government is pursuing economic policies that will help middle class families**

**The government is taking positive steps to help Indigenous people**

**The government is taking positive steps to improve education and skills training**

**The government is taking positive steps to improve our personal tax system**

**The government is taking positive steps to promote economic growth and job creation**

**The government is taking positive steps to protect the environment**

**The government is pursuing economic policies that will help people like me**

**[1 - 10]**

**0 - DK/NR**

4. Now thinking about the overall Federal Budget, to what extent would you say that what you saw and heard was for the most part positive or for the most part negative?

0 - DK/NR

1 - very positive

2 - somewhat positive

3 - neutral

4 - somewhat negative

5 - very negative

5. And would you say that what you saw and heard exceeded your expectations, met your expectations, or did not meet your expectations?

0 - DK/NR

1 - Exceeded expectations

2 - Met expectations

3 - Did not meet expectations

6. While you were observing the speech, did you think the Minister was addressing politicians and economists, or mostly to average Canadians?

0 - DK/NR

1 - To politicians and economists

2 - To average Canadians

## **POST-SPEECH DISCUSSION (45 Minutes)**

*Now I would like to have more of a discussion about what you saw/heard in the Federal Budget...*

- What was your overall impression of speech? Why?
- What were the main things that you remember hearing in the budget?
  - What are your impressions of this element? Why?
- What were the best ideas in the speech? Why?
- What were the less-positive aspects in the speech? Why?
- How would you sum up the Budget in one sentence?
- What will have the largest impact on you or your family?

As you know, you were using the dial to register your impressions of the speech as it was read. What I would like to do is ask about some specific aspects of the speech that appeared to resonate.

MODERATOR WILL HAVE THE DATA AND WILL LOOK AT THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPIKES OVER THE COURSE OF THE SPEECH. WILL SELECT 3 TO 4 TOPICS FROM POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES AND PROMPT ON THOSE.

Let's start with some of the positives...FOR EACH TOPIC IDENTIFIED...

- What did you like about this aspect from the budget? Why?
  - What did it mean to you? Was it clear? How could it have been clearer?
  - Is it relevant to you personally?

Let's turn our attention to areas where there were some declines in impressions...FOR EACH TOPIC IDENTIFIED...

- What was your impression about this aspect from the budget? Why?
  - What did it mean to you? Was it clear? How could it have been clearer?
  - Is it relevant to you personally?

Lastly, did you think this was a speech for Canadians, or Parliament/economists? Why do you say that?

## **CONCLUSION (5 Minutes)**

- We have covered a lot of topics today and really appreciate you taking the time and energy to come down here and give your opinion. Your input is very important and insightful!
- To conclude, I wanted to ask you whether you have any last thoughts that you want to give the Government of Canada?



 **Department of Finance Canada** **Ministère des Finances Canada**

For Signature by / Information of À signer par / Pour l'information de	
<b>Chief of Staff, Minister's Office</b>	
Prepared by (name/initials/division) Préparé par (nom/initiales/division)	
<b>David Gaw, Communications Operations</b>	
In consultation with (name/initials/branch(es)/division(s)) En consultation avec (nom/initiales/direction(s)/division(s))	
Approved by / Approuvé par	
Director Directrice / Directeur	<b>Jo-Ann Purcell</b>
Director General Directrice générale / Directeur général	<b>Erin O'Brien</b>
Associate Assistant Deputy Minister Sous-ministre adjoint Délégué	
Assistant Deputy Minister Sous-ministre adjoint	<b>Pam Aung Thin</b>
Associate Deputy Minister & G7 Deputy for Canada Sous-ministre délégué et représentant du Canada au G7	<b>Rob Stewart</b>
Associate Deputy Minister Sous-ministre déléguée	<b>Ava Yaskiel</b>
Deputy Minister Sous-ministre	<b>Paul Rochon</b>
Remarks / Remarques: For action. Your signature is requested by February 19, 2018.	
SUBJECT / OBJET: <b>Public Opinion Research – 2018 Budget Day Focus Groups</b>	
File no. / No de dossier	Date
<b>2018FIN469069</b>	<b>FEB 15 2018</b>

<b>Associate Deputy Minister &amp; G7 Deputy for Canada Sous-ministre délégué et représentant ( Sign on behalf of DM ) du Canada au G7 ( Signer au nom du SM )</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Associate Deputy Minister Sous-ministre déléguée ( Sign on behalf of DM ) ( Signer au nom du SM )</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Assistant Deputy Minister Sous-ministre adjoint(e) ( Sign on behalf of DM ) ( Signer au nom du SM )</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>